

Mexican Wolf Blue Range Reintroduction Project

Adaptive Management Oversight Committee

Standard Operating Procedure

Title: Supplemental Feeding

Number: 8.0

File Name: MW SOP 08.Supplemental Feeding.Final.20051010.doc

Purpose: This SOP describes when and how released wolves will be offered supplemental food, or monitored after release. It supersedes relevant sections of the 1998 Mexican Wolf Interagency Management Plan (USFWS 1998), and therefore represents, in part, the “Service Approved Management Plan” referenced in the Mexican Wolf Final Rule (50 CFR 17.84(k)).

Exceptions: None. Per SOP 2.0, AMOC must approve any exceptions to this SOP.

Background: Supplemental feeding is sometimes needed to enable wolves released from captivity to make the initial adjustment to the wild. Supplemental feeding is discontinued as soon as possible to encourage hunting behavior and to discourage human association with food. Released wolves must also be monitored closely to ensure they are adequately protected while adjusting to life in the wild. Supplemental feeding and post-release monitoring require substantial coordination among, and input from, all parties involved in the Reintroduction Project, including AMOC, the IFT, AMWG Cooperators, other stakeholders, and the public.

Note: Chronic Wasting Disease is a significant concern to wildlife management agencies and the public. Information on CWD and on prophylactic measures to ensure minimizing spread and impacts of CWD is evolving rapidly. All supplemental feeding activities in this Project shall be conducted in a manner that does not contribute to spreading CWD, or exacerbating its impacts within an area of present occurrence. AGFD, NMDGF, and WMAT shall be consulted by the IFT as necessary to ensure compliance with appropriate CWD protocols. In addition, deer, elk, or other native ungulate carcasses salvaged or donated for use as supplemental food for released or other wild Mexican wolves shall be used only in the County of origin (see also SOP 9.0, Road Kill Salvage). This applies to Arizona and to New Mexico; in other words, salvaged and donated wildlife carcasses shall not be transported from one State to the other in this Project. The interstate transport ban was instituted after CWD was documented in mule deer in New Mexico, to ensure the Project does not contribute to spread of CWD.

Note: One of the myths associated with the Reintroduction Project is that supplemental feeding includes use of beef as an ingredient in the commercial products offered to wolves. This is absolutely untrue. Beef is not used a wolf food in this Project. In addition to wildlife carcasses, the Project uses two commercial products for supplemental feeding. The primary one is a specially prepared raw meat product specifically formulated for the zoo trade and commonly referred to as “carnivore logs.” As stated on the FDA-approved label, the primary ingredient in carnivore logs is horsemeat, and the other ingredients include meat byproducts (i.e. horse organs such as heart, lungs, and spleen), dried beet (the root vegetable) pulp, salt, D-activated animal sterol (a source of vitamin D3), vitamin A supplement, vitamin B12 supplement, vitamin E supplement, menadione sodium bisulfite (a source of vitamin K activity), riboflavin supplement,

niacin, biotin, sodium selenite, calcium pantothenate, choline chloride, thiamine hydrochloride, pyridoxine hydrochloride, folic acid, copper oxide, cobalt carbonate, iron carbonate, manganous oxide, ethylene diamine dihydriodide, and zinc oxide. The Project also uses a dried, pelleted food (Mazuri Exotic Canine Diet) that is specifically formulated for the zoo trade and commonly referred to as “kibble.” The primary meat ingredients in kibble are poultry and pork. Other ingredients as detailed on the label include: ground corn, poultry byproduct meal, ground brown rice, corn gluten meal, animal fat preserved with BHA, poultry fat preserved with ethoxyquin, poultry digest, porcine meat meal, brewer’s dried yeast, dried beet (the root vegetable) pulp, ground soybean hulls, dried whey, dried egg product, flash dried blood meal, calcium carbonate, dicalcium phosphate, potassium chloride, salt, choline chloride, pyridoxine hydrochloride, menadione dimethylpyrimidinol bisulfite, DL-methionine, taurine, cholecalciferol, biotin, DL-alpha tocopheryl acetate, vitamin A acetate, inositol, folic acid, calcium pantothenate, thiamine mononitrate, ethoxyquin (a preservative), riboflavin, nicotinic acid, cyanocobalamin, manganous oxide, ferrous sulfate, cobalt carbonate, copper sulfate, zinc oxide, calcium iodate, and sodium selenite.

Procedures:

1. Supplemental feeding of released wolves.
 - a. Wolves may be offered supplemental food at a rate of approximately five pounds of meat per wolf per day.
 - b. Salvaged wildlife carcasses and/or carnivore logs (commercial meat logs designed to be fed to canids) may be used as supplemental food.
 - c. The IFT shall record all feedings in one specific database with weights and species of edible meat, UTM location, date and time of drop-off, and usage.
 - d. The IFT shall check supplemental food caches at least once weekly to determine use by wolves or other wildlife.
 - e. To avoid wolves becoming dependent upon human-provided food:
 - i. IFT members and other individuals involved in placing or otherwise managing supplemental food caches shall use appropriate resources (e.g. scent killers) and handling techniques to minimize mixing human scent or behavior with supplemental food or placing or otherwise managing such food. This includes providing appropriate attention to the manner in which supplemental food is stored, delivered, and placed.
 - ii. Supplemental feeding periods/duration shall be limited as much as possible, and shall be discontinued if evidence exists that wolves are finding or killing food on their own. Examples of evidence:
 - (1) Wolves stop using an active feed site.
 - (2) Kills of wild ungulates are found.
 - (3) Adult travel patterns indicate wolves are finding other food.
 - (4) Scat – easily determined if carnivore logs are used as supplemental food.
 - iii. If wolves become habituated to IFT members feeding (wolves appear at feeding sites, etc.) Appropriate aversive conditioning techniques should be used, such as less-than-lethal munitions, cracker shells, moving the feeding site to a near by location, etc.

- f. The IFT shall adjust specific feeding locations, frequency, and techniques as circumstances require (e.g. using different sites for food caches if other predators are nearby or to discontinue feeding when wolves begin feeding on their own).
 - g. Translocated wolves that have previously been free-ranging may not need to be supplementally fed as long as newly released wolves, unless extenuating circumstances arise that require continued supplemental feeding.
 - h. Food caches may be used by the IFT for management purposes many weeks or months post-release (i.e. bait for trapping, feeding pups that lost parents)
2. Monitoring of recently released wolves.
- a. The IFT should monitor newly released wolves (wolves that have not been in wild before) daily for two weeks after the release, and a minimum of three times per week after release to determine when wolves start feeding on wild prey.
 - b. The IFT shall monitor longer and more intensively if wolf movements or behavior indicate likelihood of nuisance behavior or other problems, and shall continue this monitoring until the situation is resolved.
 - c. The IFT shall make intensive efforts at attempting to document the transition of wolves from feeding on supplementary food to killing or scavenging native prey on their own (e.g. by marking supplementary food with phosphorescent dye and checking all scats found near the wolves). If wolves are documented feeding on their own, supplemental feeding shall cease.
 - d. When the wolves settle into normal routines without exhibiting problems and/or nuisance behavior, the IFT may terminate intensive IFT monitoring.

Approvals:

The Mexican Wolf Blue Range Reintroduction Project Adaptive Management Oversight Committee approved this SOP on October 10, 2005.

References:

U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service. 1998. 1998 Mexican Wolf Interagency Management Plan. U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, Albuquerque, New Mexico.